
Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

Superior Court of Arizona ♥ Maricopa County Juvenile Division
3125 West Durango ♥ Phoenix, AZ 85009 ♥ 602-506-4083
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January 1999

A CHILD'S VOICE IN COURT

CASA 1999

by Nancy Molever

Beginning January 1, 1999, CASA Volunteers will participate in Model Court dependency cases filed by the Attorney General at the Southeast Facility in Mesa. Cases filed at the Durango facility will be tracked for Model Court later in 1999. By law, Model Court must be fully implemented county-wide no later than January 1, 2000. This means a change in procedure and a faster, more efficient system for children.

Some of the changes include the Preliminary Protective Conference and Hearing, which is held five to seven days after a Temporary Custody Notice is served and a child is removed from home. The Attorney General, CPS investigative and on-going case managers, attorneys for children and parents, and the behavioral health provider (ComCare/ValueOptions) are all expected to attend. This is an effort to initiate and coordinate services for the child and family as quickly as possible to try to help the child and family reunite. The CASA program is aiming to assign volunteers to cases before the five-day hearing so they can also attend. Our goal is to provide independent advocacy for children in the dependency court system by assisting them on their journey through placement to permanency, and helping them achieve permanency as quickly as possible.

Another program goal is to collect the data to evaluate the impact that CASA volunteers have on the children served. The program will develop an evaluation tool and collect and measure evaluative data in order to be accountable to funders and lawmakers; to maximize

return on scarce resources; and to demonstrate to volunteers, case workers, attorneys, service providers and judicial officers that the volunteers are being effective in their advocacy work.

A newly developed screening tool is helping to identify those children who are most likely to suffer from foster care drift and help move those children through the system. The program's emphasis will parallel model court time lines by focusing on shorter term advocacy to ensure safety, permanency and expediency.

The CASA program will aim to achieve the following goals for the children we are serving:

- Children will be safe while in placement
- Children will be safe after the dependency petition has been dismissed.
- Children will live in permanent, family homes.
- Children will spend the least amount of time under court jurisdiction as possible.

Safety means no recurrence of abuse or neglect while in placement or after court case closure.

Permanence is achieved when the child returns home, is placed in an adoptive home, or when relatives are given legal custody. A family home is considered the home of parents, relatives or an adoptive home.

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CASA Program Staff

Nancy Molever	506-5221
Laura Devany	506-4425
Shannon Childs	506-4415
Leslie Blakley	506-4083

*If you have been a CASA for 2 years or more and would like to learn how you can become a mentor, please contact your CASA Coordinator.



CASA Volunteer Mentors

Angela Ashley
Anne Donahoe
Margo Fitts
Jackie Flowers
Dana Gilroy
Lynda Pederson
Rose Ruth
Karen Tyrrell

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Expediency will be measured by the average number of months children in the CASA program remain under court jurisdiction, and the percent of CASA children dismissed from court custody in 6, 12, and 18 months after assigned a CASA.

To achieve the goals of safety, permanency and expediency, the CASA volunteer will aim to monitor placements, services and visitation through volunteer reporting on the following issues:

- ▶ Children should experience stability while in foster care. Placements per child per year in custody will be monitored as well as whether children were placed together with sibling groups.
- ▶ While in care, children should be placed in the least restrictive setting consistent with their needs. Volunteers will monitor placement categories ranging from parent home to institution or hospital.
- ▶ While in care, children should be placed in close proximity of the home identified as permanent. The volunteer will monitor whether children are placed in the county of the planned permanent home.
- ▶ Cases should have written case plans which reflect permanency. The volunteer will monitor whether there is a permanent placement plan or reintegration plan, if the significant parties were present at staffings and reviews, if significant parties signed the case plan and whether the case plan was reviewed in the past six months.
- ▶ The services in the case plan should be provided to children and families. The volunteer will track if services were provided.
- ▶ Children should have frequent visitation with the family identified as permanent. The volunteer will monitor if children are having weekly visitation with family identified as permanent.

Volunteers will insure the previous outcomes and better serve children through their advocacy efforts by:

- ▶ Having frequent contacts with children, families and case planning team members involved with the case.
- ▶ Attending all court hearings in person and submitting court reports to the CASA office ten days prior to the hearings.
- ▶ Attending CPS staffing and FCRB boards in person or telephonically.
- ▶ Submitting monthly contact logs to the CASA office.

In order to achieve our goals, serve more children and better meet the needs of the volunteers, the CASA program will:

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- ▶ Increase the number of volunteers assigned to cases. Our goal is to increase the current volunteer base from 200 to 250 volunteers by July 1999. We plan to accomplish this goal by working in partnership with the State Office to develop a recruitment model that helps us better access potential volunteers in our community.
- ▶ Increase the number of children served.
- ▶ Train volunteers to prepare them for their roles in Model Court.
- ▶ Supervise volunteers to a level that meets their needs.

Juvenile Deputy Court Administrator, Noreen Sharp, has said, "Dependent children do not have time to wait. Dependency professionals do not have time to waste. Court Improvement and Model Court are overdue in Maricopa County. Let us begin."

Currently, the CASA program has a small group of committed volunteers who will be a part of the Model Court process beginning January 1, but we need more. We would like you to be a part of this cooperative and focused effort to help children and families. Let CASA begin in Model Court. For more information, call Nancy Molever at 502-5221.

FAREWELL ANGELA

CASA Coordinator Angela Cause had her last day with the CASA Program on December 11th. She is returning to her previous field of adoptions and is looking forward to working in this area again. While with the CASA Program, Angela made great strides reaching out to diverse communities and spreading the CASA word. Her previous CPS experience has been invaluable to volunteers and staff. We are sorry to lose her, but wish her well in her new job.

Angela's volunteers have been transferred to Coordinator Laura Devany at 506-4425 and Katrina Montaño's volunteers are now handled by Nancy Molever at 506-5221.

ATTENTION NEW VOLUNTEERS

Please check the training section of this newsletter for details on Post Orientation Training. If you have joined the CASA Program in the past year, this would be a good training for you.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Maricopa County CASA program is growing. We are looking for people who are interested in a recruiter and coordinator positions. Watch for the ad in Sunday's Arizona Republic or invite someone you know to apply.

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CASA SPONSORED TRAINING

January 20, 12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m., Judges Meet CASAs

- Have you ever wanted to ask a Judge how it feels to make decisions for children that permanently affect their lives? What part does the CASA play in his decision making? Well, here's your chance! Juvenile Court Judges will be joining CASAs in a Brown Bag forum for questions and answers. Come prepared to ask non case specific questions...anything else is fair game. Location: Juvenile Court Southeast Facility, 1810 S. Lewis, Saguaro Room. Bring your lunch. Please RSVP by 1-15 to the CASA Office 506-4083.

January 21, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Post Orientation Training - Attend follow-up training to the basic CASA Orientation. Topics covered will include Duties and Responsibilities of a CASA volunteer, case planning and court report writing, Title 19 eligibility and Model Court. All volunteers are welcome to come as a review or plan to attend the Model Court portion beginning at 7:45. Location: Juvenile Court Durango Facility, 3125 W. Durango, Room 223. RSVP by 1-15 to the CASA Office 506-4083.

SATELLITE TRAINING CANCELED

January 22, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. PST, Integrating the Professional in Child Maltreatment Cases

CONFERENCES

January 7 & 8, 1999, Tenth Annual Child Abuse Prevention Conference "A Decade of Progress - A Lifetime of Commitment" - 40 Workshops and seminars on: Early Brain Development, 1999 Legislative Issues, Family Violence Prevention, Child Protection Teams, Home Visiting, Child Advocacy Centers. Location: Sheraton Mesa Hotel & Community Center. Register early and save! Postmarked by Dec. 1: \$130.00, Postmarked after Dec. 1: \$145.00, Postmarked after Dec. 21: \$160.00. For more information contact: Child Abuse Prevention Conference '99, POB 432, Prescott, AZ 86302. FAX (520)778-5300, E-mail: pca@northlink.com.

February 7-10, National Network for Youth Symposium 99 - 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. More than 40 workshops, Motivational keynote speakers, Professional Development Seminars, Exhibits, New Member gathering and much more. Location Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC. For more information and Exhibitor packets please contact National Network for Youth at 202-783-7949.

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COMMUNITY SPONSORED TRAINING

January 18-21, Community Action for Prevention - Sponsored by Child Abuse Prevention Conference. Cost: Call Contact at 520-445-1807. Location: Mesa, AZ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LETS GO TO THE THEATER!

Phoenix Theater's Children's Theater, The Cookie Company, is making available to our CASA children ten seats for each performance of this year's season. Two-weeks advance notice is required and availability is on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you are interested in any of the performances, please call the Phoenix Theater box office at 254-5121. Tickets will be released for sale 15 minutes prior to curtain if they are not picked up.

Magical Magpie - February 2, 1999 - Tues. 7 p.m. Preview
Heidi - March 23, 1999 - Tues. 7 p.m. Preview

VOLUNTEER LIST

We will be updating our volunteer list and plan to make available a directory of Maricopa County's CASAs. This list will strictly be for volunteer distribution and business ONLY. If you have any objection to your address and phone number being listed, please contact the main office at 506-4083 by Friday, January 29, 1999.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Share your valuable volunteer experiences and resources with other volunteers. Submit an article for publication in the Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter. Send your articles to the CASA Office at 3125 W. Durango, Phoenix, AZ 85009 or Fax to 506-5512.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Oonagh Boppart	2	Elaine Casey	15
Jim Unland	5	Leslie Jones	17
Jennifer Boucek	5	Ellen Starkeson	18
Toni Schulte	8	Isabel Humphrey	19
Marie Ellis	10	Dorothy Schulte	23
Matt Edmondson	14	Gail Phillips-Hewlet	30

VIDEO REQUEST

A number of volunteers have asked how to get a copy of the video Judge Albrecht introduced at the 12/9 Model Court Training session. The tape can be purchased for \$70.00 from the Infant - Parent Institute at 328 N. Neil Street, Champaign, Illinois, 61820. Their fax is 217-352-4257.

JANUARY 1999						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Judges Meet CASAs 12:00 - 1:30 SEF 1810 S. Lewis RSVP by 1-15 Bring your Lunch	21 Post OT Training 5:30 - 8:30 Durango, 3125 W. Durango, RSVP by 1-15	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

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SPREADING THE WORD

Jean Davis, long-time CASA volunteer and Moon Valley resident, was interviewed in November by her community paper, The Moon Valley Tattler, for an article about the CASA program. The published article has prompted Moon Valley residents to call for program information. Thanks Jean, for the support!



Juvenile Court Commissioner Eileen Willett's article entitled, "Boys and girls Like You and I" was published in the December issue of the Maricopa Lawyer. Commissioner Willett's article tells an all too familiar story of a 14 year old girl who was alone and in trouble. She is a CPS ward who had run from her shelter and was before Commissioner Willett for sentencing. The child supports her meth habit by selling her body. Her vacant eyes and thin arms haunted the Commissioner and caused her to wonder what, if anything, can make a child like this change her life.

"I had never heard of the Court Appointed Advocate Program before I came to Juvenile Court" Commissioner Willett says in her article. She feels that a CASA could have made the difference for the little girl who had no one to visit her in detention; someone who could have been her advocate as she moved through the system, someone who could have been a friend and a mentor. "I've met some resilient, brave little fighters. True Survivors. They reminded me so much of you and me," Commissioner Willett said.

The CASA Program thanks Commissioner Willett for her support of the program and for allowing us to submit her article to the Maricopa Lawyer for publication.



Special thanks to CASA volunteers Karen Tyrrell and Mark Salem for supporting the CASA public relations and recruitment effort by participating in an interview which resulted in a great article for The Tribune published December 2, 1998. Thanks also to Judge Portley and Deputy Court Administrator, Noreen Sharp, for taking time from their busy schedules to be interviewed for the article.

REMINDER: GET YOUR COURT REPORTS IN!

This is just a friendly reminder to get your court report in two weeks prior to the Report and Review Hearing. Lately, staff has been receiving reports late, sometimes only days before court. Last quarter, 59% of the 90 reports due were

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received late or not at all. This causes undo stress that

affects daily workload schedules and prevents thorough review of reports.

We strongly encourage those of you with Word or WordPerfect to use the disc we've provided to you. When you mail in the disc you save support staff the time they would have to spend retyping. If you don't have a disc, call the main office 506-4083 and one will be sent to you. Reports mailed or faxed should be submitted as early as possible since they require more man hours to complete. Please don't e-mail any reports. Names must be kept confidential and not submitted on-line. We also have computers available at the CASA Office for volunteers to use.

A lot can happen between the time the report is submitted and the date of the hearing, and understandably, some of you want to wait to talk to a certain person or attend a particular meeting before submitting your report. Don't let this hold you up. Complete and submit your report and give a verbal update to the Court at the hearing.

These reports represent your dedication and hard work. Please do what you can to get them in to the CASA office on time.

COMMENDATIONS

CASA volunteer **Tobi Besse** is to be commended for her tireless and relentless fight to keep one of her CASA children safe. Tobi was assigned to a case involving a child who was removed from the home, in part, due to the child discharging a loaded firearm that was left within her reach. After two years, the decision to return the child back to the home and dismiss the dependency was complicated because Tobi felt there were possibly guns still in the home. For months Tobi tried to get CPS, ATF and the Court involved in securing the home by making sure no firearms existed. At the last Report and Review, a juvenile judge responded with swift action and ordered a search of the home and weapons were found and removed. Tobi's persistence paid off. It's not always easy, and the volunteer is often times made to look like the Town Crier, but in the end, the result is worth the fight. Thanks, Tobi, for hanging in and making a difference.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CASA is planning a lot for 1999. Get involved... Call your coordinator. Call your mentor, come to training. Look ahead to Model Court, Brown bags with judges, post orientation training and the April recognition event. It's going to be a great year for CASA, and because of you, a better year for dependent children.

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WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS!!!!

Christine Anderson
Lisa Atkins
Lynn Baker
Lisa Boyd
Suzanne Bradley
Beth Broeker
Deborah Egan
Rachel Geer
Debbie Hartel-Geringer
Judith Johnson
Terrie Kenney
Jean Long

Pat Nelson
Linda Nokes
Connie Quinn
Bette Saks
Melanie Schuele
Donna Shemer
Paula Solomon
Patricia Spinelli
Mary Stringer
Mary Thomas
Karen Wells
Pat Willis

ATTENTION MODEL COURT VOLUNTEERS

Congratulations on completing orientation training. Now that you've signed up for a Model Court case, you're probably anxious to get started and are wondering what happens next. Hopefully the following information will clear things up.

Model Court begins January 4, 1999 at the Juvenile Court Southeast Facility in Mesa. The CASA office will receive copies of all the dependency petitions filed by the Attorney General's office. We expect to get 2-4 per week. The CASA Coordinators will screen each petition and, if the case is deemed appropriate for CASA assignment, the volunteer will be called and asked if they want the case. The volunteer will either accept or decline the assignment within 24 hours. If accepted, the volunteer will be appointed to the case and begin advocating for their assigned child(ren). A 5-day hearing called the Preliminary Protective Conference and Hearing will be set and the assigned volunteer will attend.

The Court probably won't be setting 5-day hearings before the second week in January so don't expect a call from your coordinator asking you to take a case before then. Try not to be intimidated by the new Model Court process. The coordinators are here to guide you through your case and will support you in any way we can. Good luck and we'll contact you in January.



CASA PROGRAM
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